

Remarks

In section 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner objects to the disclosure on the basis of informalities. Amendments to the specification have been made to address these issues.

In section 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 9 and 13 under U.S.C. 112. Claims 9 and 13 have been amended and the basis for these amendments can be found in the specification on page 5, lines 6-9.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claim 1 under U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Martin et al (US Patent No. 6,298,038). Reconsideration is requested.

Martin teaches "a configuration for a telecommunications system that permits tributary channels to be carried transparently over a high rate line, with no change in provisioning of tributary systems," (Martin, col. 1 lines 59-61) and this is shown in Martin figures 5a-c and 7a-b. This is the complete opposite of the present invention, which relates to "a method of transporting a supercarrier signal over a network span" in which the supercarrier is demultiplexed "into a plurality of trib signals" and the "trib signals" are transmitted "over said network span" (this application, claim 1) and this is shown in this application figures 2-6.

In the network of Martin, it is the payload information of the tribs, including the APS bytes K1 and K2 which must be passed unaltered (Martin, col. 7 lines 55-60). The teaching of Martin is the opposite of the teaching of the present application in which the payload information of the supercarrier is preserved when the supercarrier is demultiplexed into tribs (this application, page 11 lines 1-3).

The invention as described in the present application, provides unexpected benefits which include the ability to use lower data rate spans within a higher data rate network without the need to terminate the data and re-encode it. One example where this would be useful is shown in figure 2 because lower data rate connections can be engineered to have greater reach without the requirement for repeaters which enables repeater-less submarine connections between land masses (this application, page 3 lines 4-11 and page 5 line 27 to page 6 line 2).

The Applicant therefore respectfully submits that the rejection of claim 1 cannot be sustained.

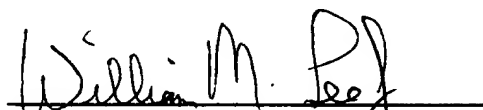
In the Office Action, the Examiner also rejects independent claims 5, 10-12 and 15 under U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Martin. The arguments above relating to claim 1 are also applicable to all these claims, and the Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of these claims cannot be sustained.

The Examiner also rejects dependent claims 2-4, 6-9, 13, 14, 16 and 17. As these are dependent on claims which are now deemed allowable, it is respectfully submitted that these rejections are moot in light of the foregoing.

In view of the fact that all the Examiner's comments have been addressed, further and favorable consideration is respectfully submitted.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William M. Lee, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

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Version With Markings Showing Changes Made

9. (Amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim [5] 6, wherein the network span includes both a transparent multiplexer and a transparent demultiplexer at each end, wherein a supercarrier signal can be transported bi-directionally.

13. (Amended) The network span as claimed in claim 12, wherein the network span includes both a transparent multiplexer and a transparent demultiplexor at each end, wherein a supercarrier signal can be transported bi-directionally.

Specification showing amendments

Page 10, lines 5 – 14:

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Figure 3 shows in more detail the network span 10. An STM-64 Add/Drop multiplexer (ADM, [23] 2, 3) is provided at either end of the network span 10. A short length of STM-64 connection (10a, 10b) between the IMUX (15, 16) and the ADM (2, 3) is illustrated for clarity only and may not be present in a practical system. The IMUX 15 transparently demultiplexes the STM-64 signal from the ADM 2 into four STM-16 signals passes each signal along an STM-16 connection (11 to 14). The IMUX 16 re-multiplexes the four STM-16 signals into an STM-64 signal which is passed along to the ADM 3. Since traffic passes in both directions around the network, the same happens in reverse (i.e. ADM 3 to ADM 2).